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36). They quote the opinions of Dr. Hamer and Dr. Crookshank "that the association or juxtaposition of cerebro-spinal fever, polio-encephalomyelitis, the Heine-Medin complex and epidemic influenza is not fortuitous, but may be well founded." Certain observations follow on the epidemic in England and Wales, in Scotland, and in Ireland. A discussion of the forms of epidemic curves (p. 55) contains this statement of interest to statisticians:

> Great improvements in the art of curve fitting and the graphical representation of mathematical formulae expressing biological laws or ways of happening . . . have permitted the hope that by analysis of epidemic curves, light may be thrown upon the genesis of the epidemic. The subject has not, however, yet been sufficiently developed to permit the realization of these hopes in the present connection. Upon the whole . . . the balance of probability inclines to the view that the *materies morbi* itself underwent an evolution similar in form to, but more rapid than, the life cycles of flux and reflux, which, Dr. Brownlee has contended, are principal factors of varying epidemicity. Some light may be thrown upon this by harmonic analysis directed to disclose periodicities of incidence.

At the close of this chapter there is a discussion of the epidemic curves for three British ships. There is a suggestion that if some method of resolving compound epidemic curves into monomodal components were at hand, certain valuable epidemiological observations could have been made.

Chapter VII contains some skillful handling of weather and respiratory disease mortality data. The methodological blunders of students of physiological meteorology in our own country are avoided, and due credit is given to Farr's original work on the subject.

Dr. R. Bruce Low contributes a valuable collection of data on the influenzas in Europe and in the Western Hemisphere in Part II of the volume (pp. 202–348).

Part XII of the Appendix, a note on the periodicity of influenza, by Dr. John Brownlee, concludes the volume. This note expands Dr. Brownlee's short article on the same subject in the London *Lancet* (November 8, 1919). He reiterates his statement that influenza tends to recur in 33 week cycles, as determined by his application of the "periodogram," a devise he borrowed from the physicists. Replying to some criticism of his *Lancet* article, he reinforces his former arguments by a study of the Boston, Massachusetts, figures for the influenzas prevailing between 1889 and 1900. Here he finds a rigid periodicity of 33 weeks.

This collection of British data should be read in connection with Dr. Warren T. Vaughan's "Influenza: An Epidemiology Study," published in the *American Journal of Hygiene*, Monograph Series No. 1, July, 1921.

E. W. Kopf

Official Statistics: What They Contain and How to Use Them. By Arthur L. Bowley, Sc.D., Professor of Statistics in the University of London. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1921. Pp. 63.

One's first reaction on examining this little book of sixty-three pages, with less than four hundred words on a typical page, is a sense of disappointment that it is not for trained students of economics and statistics. They would welcome a book under this title written by the author for them, but they are not the readers the author had in mind when he prepared the present essay. It appears in *The World of Today Series*, and although the purpose of the series and of the book itself is not specifically set forth, they are obviously designed for persons with a definite interest in public questions but with no special training and experience in their study. One who is familiar with the work of our large government statistical offices knows of the almost amazing popular demand for statistics, and the frequent failure to appreciate the almost inevitable limitations to their use. For this type of British citizen Dr. Bowley has written. A similar work designed for American readers would be distinctly worth while.

The book is divided into four chapters, (1) Population, (2) Industry, Trade, and Prices, (3) Income and Wages, and (4) Social Conditions. The writer says: "The main omission is that of reports on revenue taxation and rates; something had to be sacrificed for the sake of space and these reports have a financial rather than a statistical bearing." Under each chapter heading comes several specific subjects; for example, in the chapter on Population are treated, Population, Occupations, Births, Deaths and Marriages, and Migration. The general arrangement under each subject is to discuss first the sources, including briefly the general method of collection and the chief defects and pitfalls. Then, in most cases, is given a selection of figures from the official reports illustrative of their scope, followed by a short textual analysis of the tabulation indicative of how the figures should be used. Throughout run cautions against blind acceptance of figures, and excellent advice is given regarding careful study of how the figures are made before attempting to use them.

LEWIS MERIAM